

# The Library Assistant:

*The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.*

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## THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

FOUNDED 1895. THIRD SESSION. YEAR 1897-8.

*Members are requested to carefully read the announcements appearing on this page, as no further intimation of meetings and other arrangements will be sent out.*

### JUNE MEETING.

The last meeting of the session will be held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, June 8th, at 20, Hanover Square, W., when Mr. H. R. Tedder, Librarian of the Athenæum and President of the Library Association, will read a paper on "Young Librarians and Self-improvement." Light refreshments will be provided.

### ANNUAL MEETING.

The Third Annual Meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, July 13th, at 20, Hanover Square.

All nominations for Officers and Committee, and all notices of proposed Amendments to the Rules of the Association, or other Motions, should be made in writing to the Hon. Sec., on or before June 30th.

Copies of the Annual Report will be sent out with the July number of this journal.

### SUMMER PROGRAMME, 1898.

By the special permission of the Right Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., the first meeting of the Summer Session, 1898, will take the form of a visit to Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, on Wednesday, June 29th. Arrangements are being made by which facilities will be given to see the treasures of the Hatfield Library, and the party will, in addition, be given full opportunity to see the historic mansion of the Cecils, together with the charming grounds and gardens. Lady members and friends are especially invited on this interesting occasion, and it is hoped that a sufficiently large number will join the party at King's Cross, so as to enable it to travel at special rates, viz., 1s. 10d. The train will leave King's Cross Station at 2.30 p.m., but members intending to join the party are requested to communicate with the Hon. Sec. at the earliest possible date.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

## MAY MEETING.

A meeting was held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, May 4th, at Poplar Central Library, High Street, Poplar, E. The chair was occupied by Mr. R. Newman, Chairman of the Poplar Library Committee, and there was a good attendance.

After the reading of the minutes, the members proceeded to elect two Auditors. Mr. J. W. Brown, of Shoreditch, and Mr. H. P. Dinelli, of Hammersmith, having been duly nominated, were elected unanimously.

Mr. Harry Rowlatt, Librarian of Poplar, then gave an address on "Library Accounts," which was illustrated by a *fac-simile* set of accounts, representing the books of a library for three months, entered in the method advocated, copies of which, by the lecturer's kindness, had been carefully prepared, and sent out, upon application, to those who intended being present, some days before, thus enabling them to follow the lecture more closely. The address was ably given, and by means of frequent reference to the sample books, the methods used were succinctly explained; the many difficult points of the subject being dealt with in a masterly fashion, and even to those who had never seen a set of library account books before, the system was made quite clear. The great merit of the method of book-keeping advocated was the reduction of labour, and the keeping of as few books and accounts as was possible. A universal form was used for all Miscellaneous Receipts, Fines, Sales, Catalogues, Lost Books, Waste Paper, &c., the counterfoils of six or more of such receipts being on each page of the book used, and the totals being carried forward from page to page, till the end of the year. An analysis book was made up each day, with the daily total fines, sales, &c. These are added up each month and carried to the cash-book as a receipt, and thence to the ledger, thus having but one ledger account for the whole of the miscellaneous receipts. The various items in the cash book and the petty cash book were gone through, and the analysis of the petty cash account into the various ledger accounts, Wages, Books, Lighting, Carriage, &c., was explained. The proper method of entering loan accounts, and of keeping these separate was also fully gone into, and after a careful explanation of the various ledger accounts, the closing of the books for an audit and the preparation of a balance-sheet was fully dealt with.

A long discussion ensued on various points raised, the universal receipt coming in for some criticism from Messrs. Pickard, Chambers, &c., mainly on the ground that it entailed more work than the using of many receipt books, each printed for a different amount, but it was pointed out that the method advocated, if it were a little more trouble, enabled one to trace an overcharged fine on complaint easily, which it was difficult to do with the other system. The members were, however, mostly in favour of receipts with the amounts printed on them, in

preference to filling in the blank receipts. A less hotly debated point was raised by Mr. Carter, as to whether, if Miscellaneous Receipts could be compressed into one ledger account, Miscellaneous Payments could not also be so dealt with, and some interesting details were given of the varying methods passed, if not ordered, by auditors in different places.

Mr. Rowlatt having suitably dealt with each point in the discussion as it arose, on the motion of Mr. B. L. Dyer, seconded by Mr. J. F. Hogg, a vote of thanks was accorded to him for his paper and his hospitality. In reply, Mr. Rowlatt welcomed the Association to Poplar, and dwelt on the useful work it was doing. On the motion of Mr. A. H. Carter, seconded by Mr. F. M. Roberts, a vote of thanks was given to Mr. R. Newman for his kindly presiding, and in reply, that gentleman expressed his pleasure in meeting so many young librarians anxious to make themselves familiar with the routine detail and work of their profession, and concluded with a few remarks on the high dignity and office of librarianship.

After the Secretary's announcements, the meeting was kindly entertained to light refreshments by Mr. and Mrs. Rowlatt.

#### AN AFTERNOON AT WEST HAM.

By the kind invitation of Mr. A. Cotgreave, some members of the L.A.A. were enabled to inspect the new West Ham Central Library, in the Romford Road, on Wednesday, 4th May, in the afternoon. An opportunity does not often occur to library assistants to see a library in process of building, and the visit proved very instructive, much interest being displayed in the plan and decoration of the West Ham Library and Institute. Mr. and Mrs. Cotgreave kindly entertained the visitors to tea in the temporary premises of the library, Rokeby House.

**SUPERANNUATION.**—The L.A.O. Superannuation Bill, 1898, was not reached on the 27th April, but was down for reading again on the 17th May, when it was also not reached.

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The most noteworthy event of the past month has been the close of the first session of the technological lectures organised by the Library Association. The interest of the students and their attendance has been maintained, and on the whole this experimental series of lectures must be considered to have been a great success. But *experientia docet*, and the organisers, lecturers and pupils have each learnt much that was hitherto unknown practically in this matter of systematised lectures in the technological education of librarians. The greatest lesson that each has learnt for the first time, by practical experience, has perhaps been that it is not possible to compass all knowledge of a subject in one course of seven or ten lectures. Especially

in the Elementary Bibliography and the Historical Printing subjects, must be entered a plea for the sub-division of the lectures, and the confining of a course of lectures to a less wide area. And then not only must the area of the subject be restricted somewhat—but the classes must be sub-divided. The day has gone past in librarianship when men of fifteen or more years' experience in the profession can with equal benefit attend lectures with lads of perhaps not so many months' experience! In the cataloguing class, for example, lads who had practically no knowledge whatever of the most elementary principles of subject cataloguing were plunged in *medias res*, where branch librarians who had practical and theoretical knowledge of the subject might gain knowledge, but which to them was as useful as a lecture on co-sines to a lad who knows not his multiplication table! But next session, we shall no doubt do much better, and when the classes are confined to members of the profession, it will be much easier to sub-divide the subjects, and to have a graded course of instruction. Only the heaven-born librarian, or the would-be heaven born one, attends a single course of lectures, and seeks to derive all knowledge of librarianship from it!

Mr. Frank Campbell, who, members will be glad to learn, has returned to the British Museum, after a long absence from ill-health, writes: "I have found a copy of the 'L.A.', on my table for which I write to thank you. I am most interested and pleased to note this further advance in the praiseworthy efforts of the Library Assistants to help themselves. I am sure such a publication will do much to infuse and maintain a healthy *esprit-de-corps* among the members of the L.A.A., and promote efficiency of work, and I wish it every success in the future."

A feminine correspondent from the North-West kindly sends me some references to articles on the subject of women's employment in libraries, and agrees in the protest made in this column last month against the employment of women at less pay than men for the same work. A paper from the pen of a woman working in a library on the subject would be welcome.

"S.L.," a London assistant, writes a letter unfortunately too long to print, advocating the employment of women temporarily in lending libraries for less hours than men, at relatively smaller wages, as a professional expedient against the army of boys now employed, to whom but little prospect of ever obtaining posts in the higher walks of librarianship is open. He controverts the quotation made from Mr. P. Cowell as to women librarians and marriage, and would have a body of women assistants definitely engaged for short hours at poor pay, who shall look forward to marriage as an escape from daily drudgery. What the other sex would say as to this proposition is perhaps best left for them to express, but economically it is based on a wrong conception of

the difficulties of the situation, and simply substitutes the exploitation of the girl for the exploitation of the boy. A careful study of the little sixpenny pamphlet "*Public Library Staffs*," (No. 3 of the L.A. Series), by Mr. Cowell, is to be commended to anyone interested in the question, which after all cannot be better put *from the librarian's standpoint* than in his own words, p. 22 :—

"The great difficulty attending their employment [boys] is their constant coming and going. The librarian trains them carefully in their simple duties and then when they have become useful they find other situations for themselves, and leave him to begin *de novo* with other boys. Seeing, however, that he cannot secure promotion for them as fast as they grow up this . . . is inevitable. . . It is owing to this that some libraries have resorted to a sort of compromise in the employment of young women, hoping thus to secure longer service, and steadier and more thoughtful work and conduct, while only paying some 50 per cent. more wages."

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Can anyone give any information as to a proposition made in 1885 by a Mr. Horace Cannons, of Wells Street, Oxford Street, for an Association of Library Assistants, and say if the meeting proposed in the advertisement in the "*Athenæum*" was held?

B. L. D.

#### WILLIAM BLADES.

By W. B. THORNE.

William Blades was born on December 5th, 1824, at Clapham, Surrey. He was educated at Clapham Grammar School, and upon leaving School entered his father's business in the City. Here he acquired a practical knowledge of the art of printing, which was of the greatest assistance to him in the task which, from an early age, he had set his mind on.

He commenced book-collecting soon after his apprenticeship, and when he had got together twenty-six books on printing, he thought that he must have everything that there was to be had.

From the very first he seems to have made Caxton his idol, and determined to find out all that he possibly could about him, and it is well known how well he succeeded. His first literary effort was in 1858, when he wrote an introduction to a facsimile reproduction of Caxton's "*Governayle of Helthe*." This was followed by many contributions to magazines, and in 1861 the first volume of his monumental work, the "*Biography and Typography of William Caxton*," was brought out. Two years later the second volume appeared. To commemorate the Caxton Exhibition of 1877 he published a second edition in one volume at a much reduced price.

He was one of the leaders in the Caxton Exhibition, and if one turns to his "*Pentateuch of Printing*," it will be seen that his biographer, T. B. Reed, thus describes his first meeting with Blades :—"The man of letters was in his shirt-sleeves, busy with the unpacking of a box of Caxtons. He was the guiding spirit of the scene. While others despaired of being up to time, he kept his head and worked hard. While others differed and

argued, he was serene and genial. It was impossible in his presence to stand idle, or doubt for a moment the success of his undertaking."

He was the author of twenty books, and his contributions to magazines, etc., number sixty-three.

His acquaintanceship with Bradshaw, of Cambridge, was a close one, and he is mentioned several times in Prothero's life of the great Cambridge bibliographer.

During his lifetime, Blades gathered round him a fine collection of books, and although it is not extensive, numbering as it does only about two thousand vols., and the same number of pamphlets, it is said to be the most *complete* collection extant. It is full of works of interest, and the catalogue, when published, will be a most valuable one. It may surprise some to know that, although Blades was the greatest authority on Caxton, there is not a single book from the prototypographer's press in the Library. All it contains is one or two loose sheets. He was *not* a collector of Caxtons, as he tells us in his little work "How to tell a Caxton" (1870), nor was he a buyer of rarities and first editions. He only bought those books which were guides to his work. Truly, occasionally he seems to have bought a curiosity; for instance, there is a chained copy of Foxe's "Acts and Monuments," dated 1576; he may have bought it as a specimen of black letter, or simply because it was chained. There is a Bible printed in London by Barker in 1616, with notes on the fly-leaf to the effect that a former owner read it through seven times whilst in prison, taking about a year for each reading.

Now Blades was a gatherer up of unconsidered trifles, and he recognised the fact that an article in a magazine, though apparently ephemeral, would some day be valuable, and the result is the fine collection of pamphlets, neatly bound, numbered, and labelled, that are stored at St. Bride's. He even thought that a French Calendar, having a biographical notice of a printer, for each day, worthy of taking carefully to pieces, pasting down on sheets and binding. He made a fine collection of type specimen books from the earliest dates, and wrote several articles on them for the magazines. As a man he was loved by all, being of that kind, genial disposition that never made an enemy. As his Library shows, he must have been gentle, methodical, and far-seeing, and his death on April 28th, 1890, must have been a great blow to every one of his friends.

#### NOTES AND NEWS.

ARBROATH.—The New Public Library—the gift of Mr. David Corsar—will be formerly opened on June 4th, Mr. John Morley, M.P., taking a part in the proceedings.

BATH.—The "*Builder*" of May 7th contains plan and elevation of the Reference Library and Art Gallery of Bath Municipal Buildings.

**BIRMINGHAM.**—Tenders have been accepted for the re-building of Birmingham Old Library.

**BOSTON.**—The old Poultry Market is to be converted into a Public Library and Reading Room.

**BOSTON, U.S.A.**—A cabinet to hold 20,000 mounted photographs of the world's architecture and the allied arts has been placed on the "special libraries floor."

**BOW.**—A proposal to purchase a site in the Roman Road for the erection of the Bow Library has been deferred till after the Vestry elections.

**BROMLEY, ST. LEONARD.**—At a recent Vestry Meeting premiums of £25 and £15 were awarded to the authors of the plans placed first and second for the Central Library premises, No. 86, Bow Road. A report was read at the same meeting, from the manager of the existing library, of which the following paragraph is of more than local interest:—

"The reading room is always well patronised; often overcrowded. But it is very much to be regretted that the disorder which obtains, through the ill-behaviour of mischievous youths, etc., causes numerous complaints from readers, and renders the library much more popular than it otherwise would be. The only remedy for this would be a man in uniform, a fact which has been amply proved in every other London library."

From the same report it is to be learnt that librarians are indebted to Bromley for the invention of the system of reserving books by postcard.—"It has been greatly appreciated, and . . . has since been adopted by . . . Library Authorities."

**CEFN, GLAMORGAN.**—The foundation stone of the Library has been laid by Mr. J. Lloyd, of Cefn.

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, U.S.A.**—The "*English Mechanic*" of May 6th reprints an account of the "moon" which lights up the dome of the reading room, an interesting experiment in lighting with reflected lights.

**HAMMERSMITH.**—The Vestry have formally recorded a vote of thanks to their officers in the Library Department in recognition of their services.

**HAMPSTEAD.**—The British Museum has presented a valuable collection of books and fac-similes.

**HORNSEY.**—"London," of May 19th, contains an elevation of the Central Library, now building at Crouch End.

**JEDBURGH.**—The Library Committee have acquired a site for the Public Library, towards the cost of the erection of which Mr. A. Carnegie is giving £2,000.

**HAWORTH.**—The District Council have received an offer of £500 toward the cost of a library, if the Acts are adopted.

**LIMEHOUSE.**—The poll on May 15th had a result as follows: For, 2824, Against, 772, Majority for 2052. The district comprises



Shadwell, Ratcliff and Wapping, as well as Limehouse, and is the last of the Tower Hamlets to adopt the Acts. Bethnal Green and Spitalfields alone of East End Parishes have yet to be polled.

MARYLEBONE.—The poll on May 8th had a result as follows:—For, 4,241; Against, 4,617. Majority against, 376. Thus for the sixth time the Acts are rejected, though again by a reduced majority, the last poll having been:—For, 1,623; Against, 5,886.

RAINHAM, KENT.—This village library, administered by a Committee of the Parish Council, with an income of about £40 per annum, is doing a useful work, and has recently moved into more commodious premises.

SOUTH HORNSEY.—The members of the Urban District Council are not at all anxious to decide the question of adopting the Library Acts themselves, but are desirous of going to the expense of a poll.

STREATHAM.—The opening of the Branch Library at Balham, to the cost of which Sir Henry Tate is a large contributor, by Lord Dunraven, was postponed from the 23rd to the 30th May.

WEST HAM.—The School Board has decided to co-operate with the Library Committee in their endeavour to establish Circulating Libraries in the schools.

#### APPOINTMENTS.

ALDRED, Mr. THOMAS, Librarian, Barrow-in-Furness, to be Librarian, St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark.

BECK, Mr. ERNEST, Sub-Librarian, Barrow-in-Furness, to be Librarian *pro. tem.*

#### THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

SUMMER SCHOOL: LONDON, 1898.

The Sixth Session of the Summer School will be held in London, and the opening meeting, which will take the form of a social gathering, will be held at 20, Hanover Square, on Monday evening, July 18th. It will conclude on Friday, July 22nd, and some interesting visits and lectures are in course of arrangement. It will be noted that it has been considered advisable to change the date from that announced in the last number of this journal. At the time of going to press the programme is not quite complete, but all information may be had on application to Mr. H. D. Roberts, the Hon. Secretary, St. Saviour's Public Library, S.E. No fee will be charged to those students engaged in library administration.

#### CLASSES.

An examination in connection with the Classes just closed, it is announced, will be held in June. The Secretary of the Education Committee will communicate with all the Students in good time, and advises those who intend to present themselves for examination to spend the interval in reading up the subjects on the lines laid down by the respective lecturers.



